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THE TRANSFORMERS
SPOTLIGHT
SIDESWIPE
REVELATION:
PART FOUR

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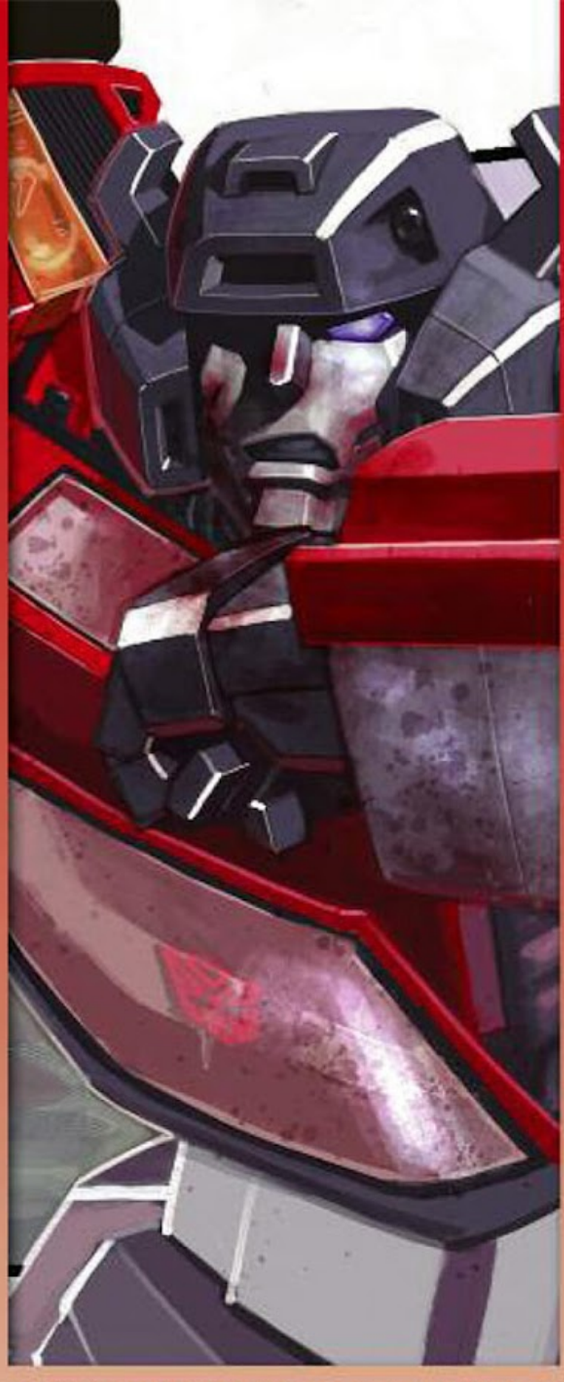
THE TRANSFORMERS
SPOTLIGHT
SIDESWIPE
REVELATION:
PART FOUR
NICK 08

Inaction weighs heavily on SIDESWIPE. He wants to be out there, in the thick of it, his insecurities and self-conceived shortcomings drowned out by the thunder of battle. Sullen, resentful, he carries the weight of another's dismissal and disdain, desperate—above all else—to prove himself, to be seen by others, and one in particular, as more than just the rookie trooper he once was. Bombastic, antagonistic, thorny, the chip he carries makes him hard to like. But, perhaps, all he ever needed was the right cause...



THE TRANSFORMERS SPOTLIGHT: SIDESWIPE

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EDITS BY: DENTON J. TIPTON

REVELATION

As the true scale of the threat from the inhabitants of the Dead Universe becomes apparent and two realities teeter on the brink of a catastrophic fusion, ULTRA MAGNUS organizes a structured fightback (based on intelligence drawn from the all-seeing, all-knowing Magnificence) on multiple fronts. Meanwhile, on Garrus-9, OPTIMUS PRIME faces NEMESIS PRIME, their battle rooted in the very foundations of the Prime/Matrix lineage, and JETFIRE dabbles in outlawed science in a desperate bid to protect CLOUDBURST, LANDMINE, GROUNDBREAKER, and WAVERIDER from the ravages of the Dead Universe, unaware that an old enemy has arisen...

PHASE FOUR CONTINUES...

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Special thanks to Hasbro's Aaron Archer, Michael Kelly, Amie Lozanski, Val Roca, Ed Lane, Michael Provost, Erin Hillman, Samantha Lomow, and Michael Verrecchia for their invaluable assistance.

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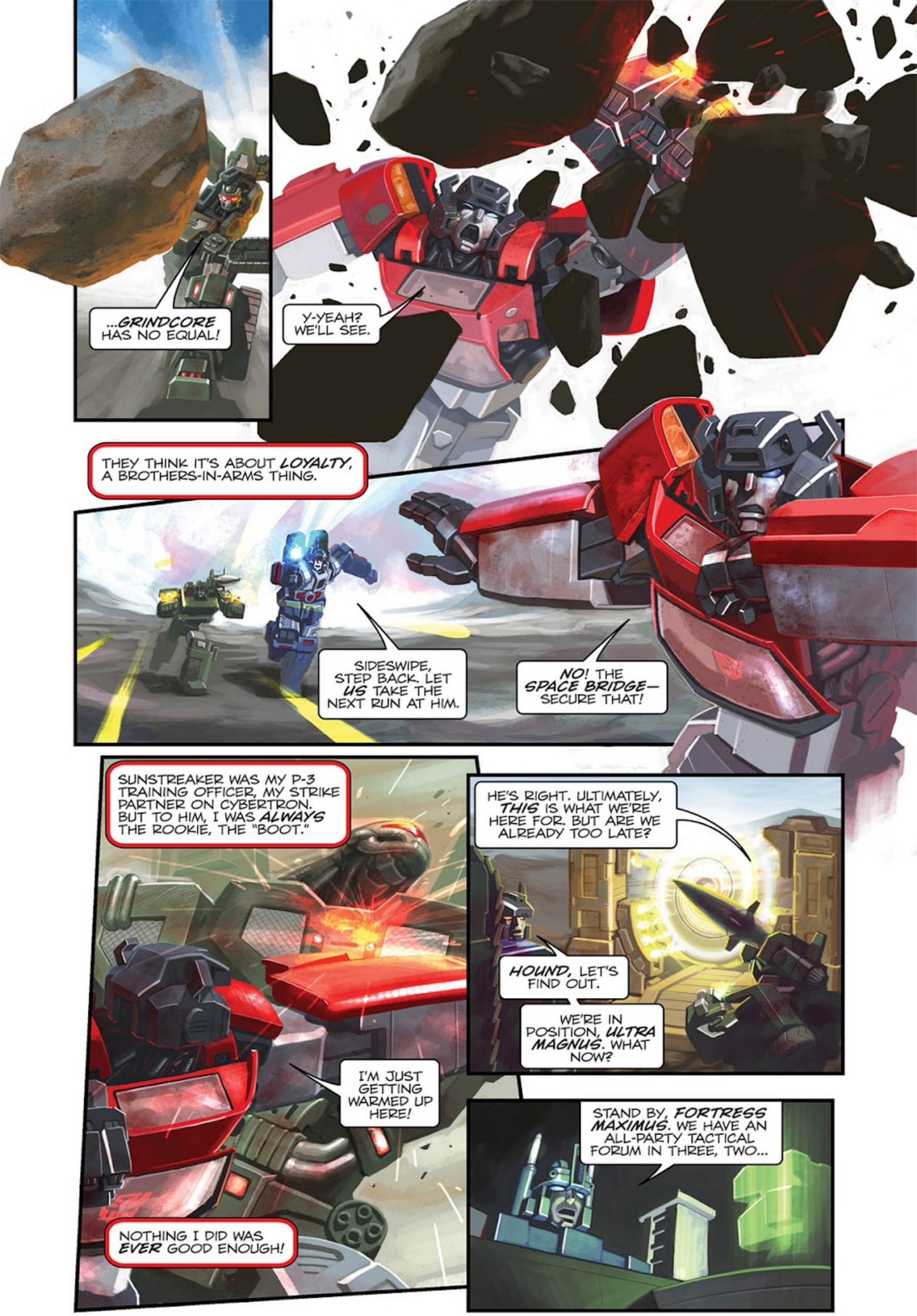
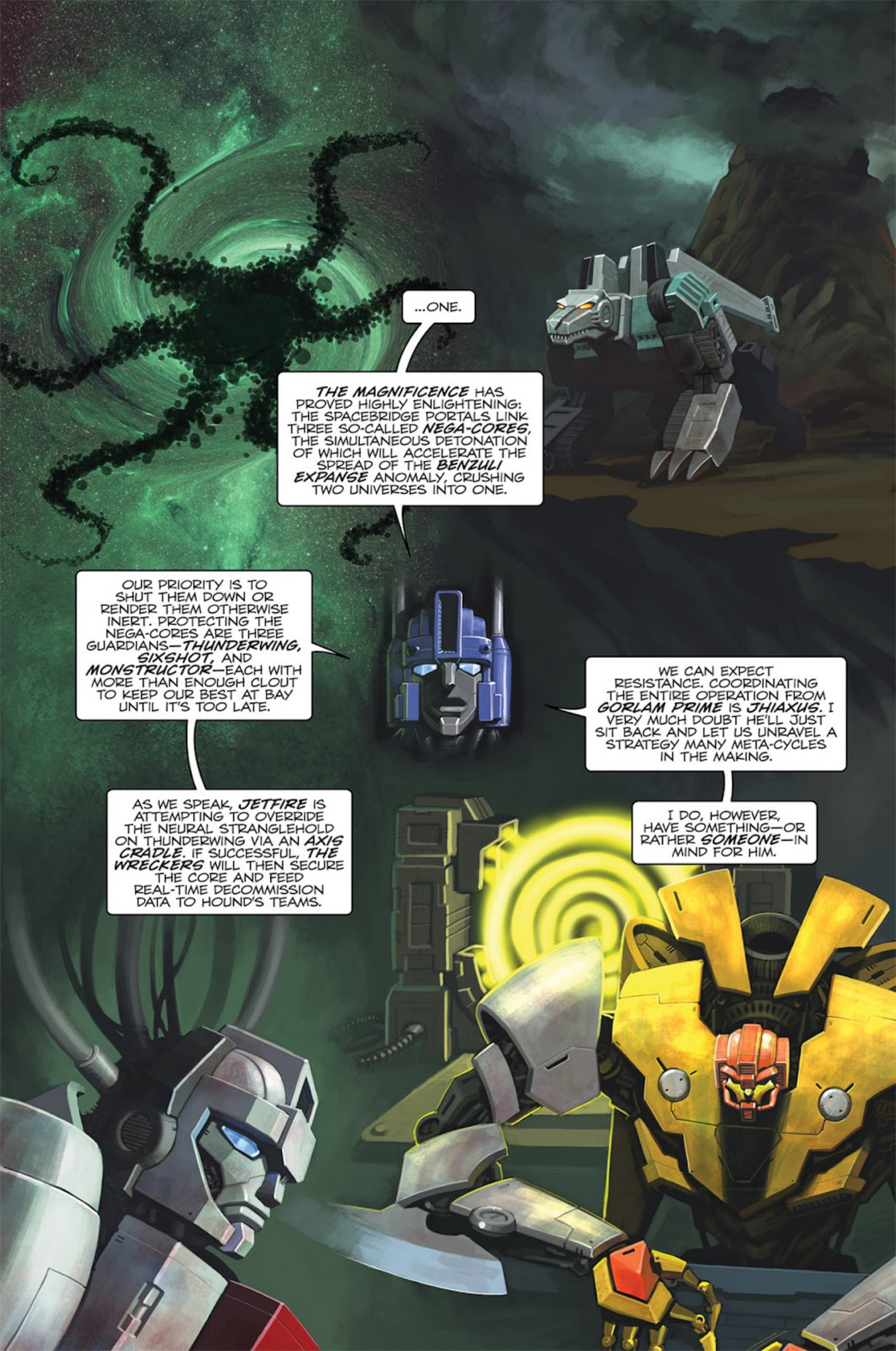
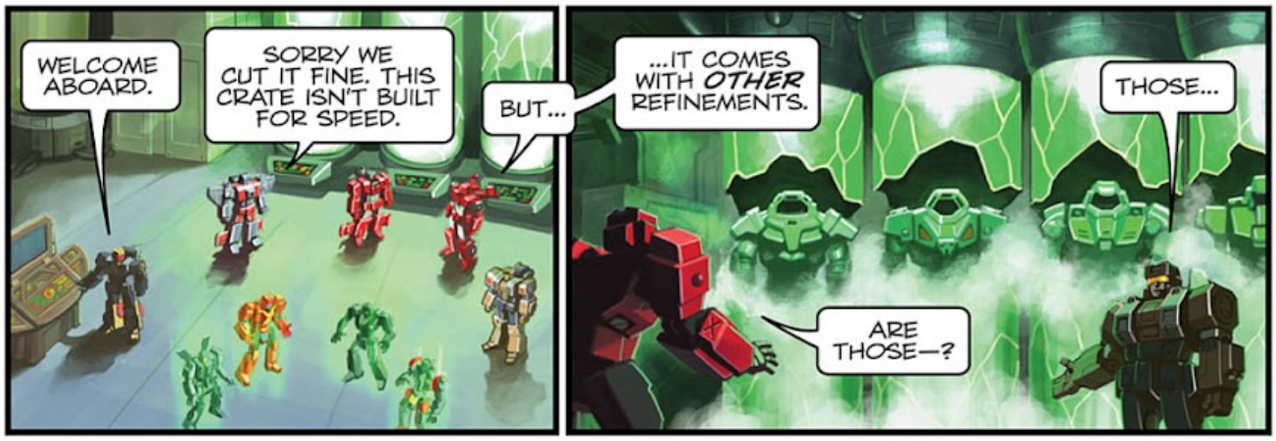
EARTH—AT LAST!
THE OTHERS THINK IT'S ALL ABOUT SUNSTREAKER, AND IT IS.
JUST NOT IN THE WAY THEY THINK.
SIDESWIPE, WAIT! ONE-ON-ONE YOU LOSE!
ALL I WANT IS TO SAVE HIS SORRY HIDE AND STEP OUT OF HIS SHADOW FOREVER!
HN. THE BIGGER THEY ARE...

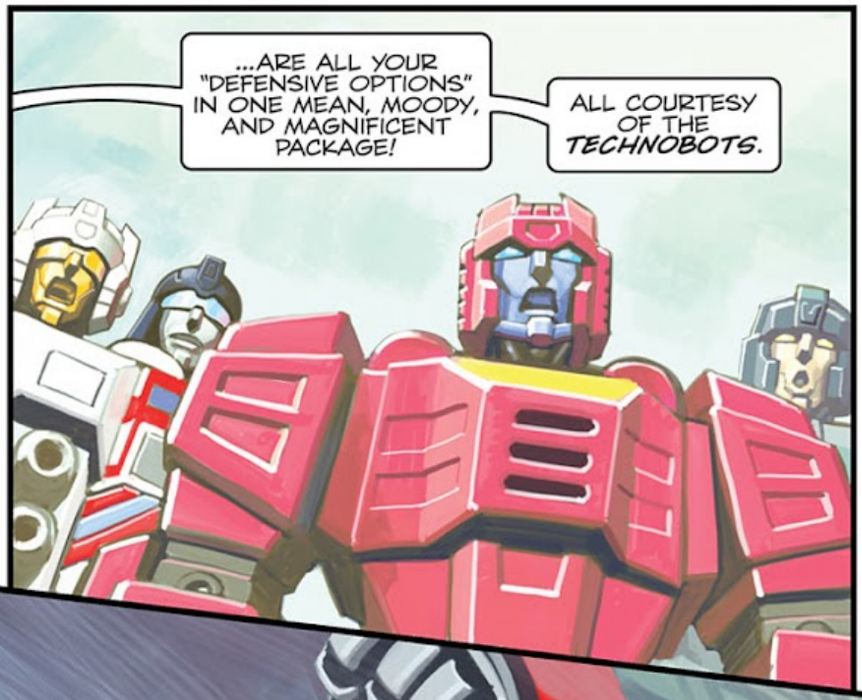
...THE MORE BITS THERE ARE TO REMOVE!
CHINA, JIANGXI PROVINCE:
THE OTHER ONE—STRAXUS—IS ALL YOURS. THIS ONE'S...
... MY DESIGNATED WHIPPING 'BOT!
SIDESWIPE... OH, WHAT'S THE POINT.
I KNOW HE'S A LOOSE CANNON, AND A PAIN IN THE POSTERIOR PLATING BUT IN A SITUATION LIKE THIS...
...HE'S EXACTLY WHAT'S NEEDED.
SHOULD'VE LISTENED TO YOUR EQUALLY DOOMED COMPATRIOTS, AUTOBOT. WHEN IT COMES TO SHEER BLUDGEONING FORCE...


...GRINDCORE HAS NO EQUAL!
Y-YEAH? WE'LL SEE.
THEY THINK IT'S ABOUT LOYALTY, A BROTHERS-IN-ARMS THING.
SIDESWIPE, STEP BACK. LET US TAKE THE NEXT RUN AT HIM.
NO! THE SPACE BRIDGE— SECURE THAT!
SUNSTREAKER WAS MY P-3 TRAINING OFFICER, MY STRIKE PARTNER ON CYBERTRON. BUT TO HIM, I WAS ALWAYS THE ROOKIE, THE "BOOT."
I'M JUST GETTING WARMED UP HERE!
NOTHING I DID WAS EVER GOOD ENOUGH!
HE'S RIGHT. ULTIMATELY, THIS IS WHAT WE'RE HERE FOR. BUT ARE WE ALREADY TOO LATE?
HOUND, LET'S FIND OUT.
WE'RE IN POSITION, ULTRA MAGNUS. WHAT NOW?
STAND BY, FORTRESS MAXIMUS. WE HAVE AN ALL-PARTY TACTICAL FORUM IN THREE, TWO...


...ONE.
THE MAGNIFICENCE HAS PROVED HIGHLY ENLIGHTENING: THE SPACEBRIDGE PORTALS LINK THREE SO-CALLED NEGA-CORES, THE SIMULTANEOUS DETONATION OF WHICH WILL ACCELERATE THE SPREAD OF THE BENZULI EXPANSE ANOMALY, CRUSHING TWO UNIVERSES INTO ONE.
OUR PRIORITY IS TO SHUT THEM DOWN OR RENDER THEM OTHERWISE INERT. PROTECTING THE NEGA-CORES ARE THREE GUARDIANS—THUNDERWING, SIXSHOT, AND MONSTRUCTOR—EACH WITH MORE THAN ENOUGH CLOUT TO KEEP OUR BEST AT BAY UNTIL IT'S TOO LATE.
WE CAN EXPECT RESISTANCE. COORDINATING THE ENTIRE OPERATION FROM GORLAM PRIME IS JHIAXUS. I VERY MUCH DOUBT HE'LL JUST SIT BACK AND LET US UNRAVEL A STRATEGY MANY META-CYCLES IN THE MAKING.
AS WE SPEAK, JETFIRE IS ATTEMPTING TO OVERRIDE THE NEURAL STRANGLEHOLD ON THUNDERWING VIA AN AXIS CRADLE. IF SUCCESSFUL, THE WRECKERS WILL THEN SECURE THE CORE AND FEED REAL-TIME DECOMMISSION DATA TO HOUND'S TEAMS.
I DO, HOWEVER, HAVE SOMETHING—OR RATHER SOMEONE—IN MIND FOR HIM.

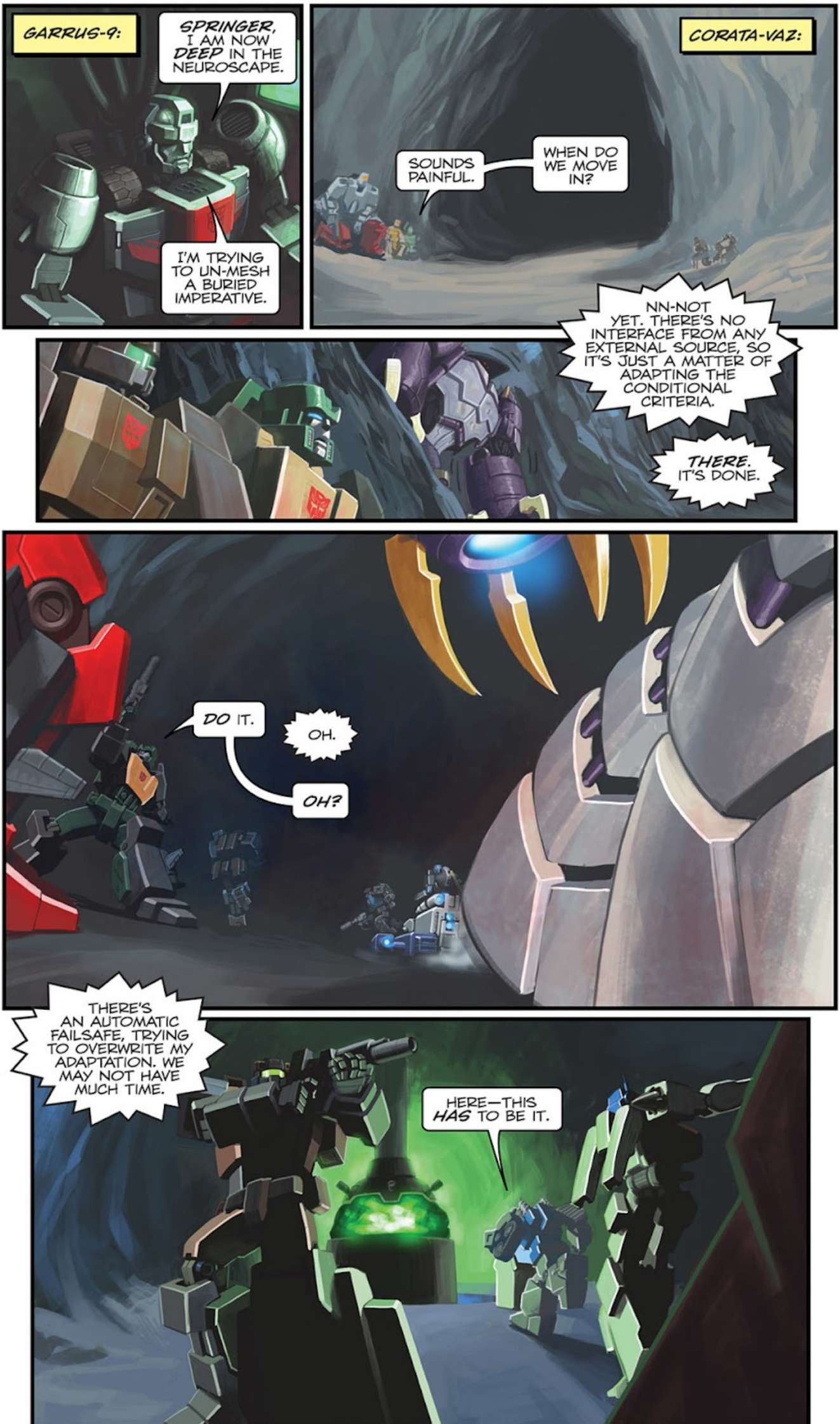
THE BENZULI EXPANSE:
IF ANYONE'S RECEIVING US...
...THIS IS CLOUDBURST, ON BEHALF OF WAVERIDER, LANDMINE, AND GROUNDBREAKER.
THE MAIN POWER GRID JUST WENT DOWN AND OUR SHIELDS WITH IT. NAVIGATIONAL, HELM, AND TACTICAL ARE HISTORY. THE HOSTILE WE NOW KNOW AS CYCLONUS...
...HAS EXHAUSTED OUR LIMITED DEFENSIVE OPTIONS. IN SHORT, WE CAN'T LAST MUCH LONGER. THIS IS AUTOBOT SCIENCE VESSEL MIRROR-MANIFOLD...
"...SIGNING OFF."
CREW OF THE MIRROR-MANIFOLD...
"...PREPARE FOR EMERGENCY SHIP-TO-SHIP JUMP!"

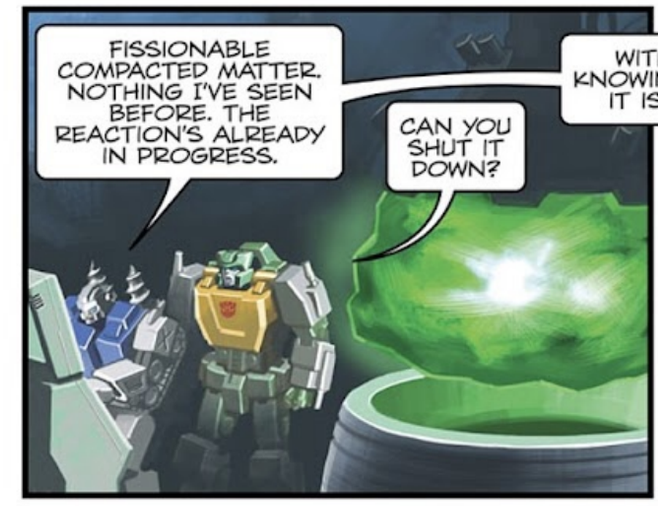

WELCOME ABOARD.
SORRY WE CUT IT FINE. THIS CRATE ISN'T BUILT FOR SPEED.
BUT...
...IT COMES WITH *OTHER* REFINEMENTS.
THOSE...
ARE THOSE—?

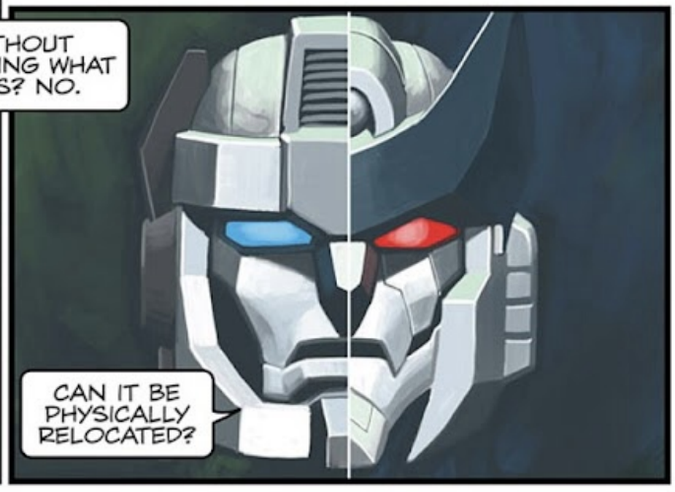

...ARE ALL YOUR "DEFENSIVE OPTIONS" IN ONE MEAN, MOODY, AND MAGNIFICENT PACKAGE!
ALL COURTESY OF THE *TECHNOBOTS*.

DON'T THINK FOR A MOMENT YOU CAN CHEAT ME OF MY RIGHTFUL KILL.

OH—*PERISH THE THOUGHT!*


GARRUS-9:
SPRINGER, I AM NOW DEEP IN THE NEUROSCAPE.
I'M TRYING TO UN-MESH A BURIED IMPERATIVE.
CORATA-VAZ:
SOUNDS PAINFUL.
WHEN DO WE MOVE IN?
NN-NOT YET. THERE'S NO INTERFACE FROM ANY EXTERNAL SOURCE, SO IT'S JUST A MATTER OF ADAPTING THE CONDITIONAL CRITERIA.
THERE. IT'S DONE.
DO IT.
OH.
OH?
THERE'S AN AUTOMATIC FAILSAFE, TRYING TO OVERWRITE MY ADAPTATION. WE MAY NOT HAVE MUCH TIME.
HERE—THIS HAS TO BE IT.

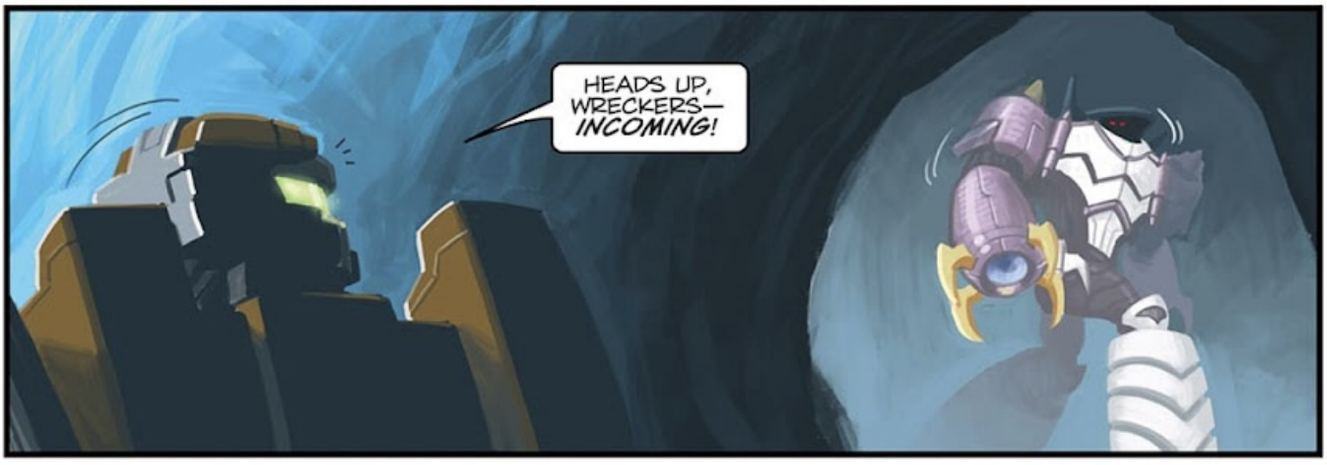

FISSIONABLE COMPACTED MATTER. NOTHING I'VE SEEN BEFORE. THE REACTION'S ALREADY IN PROGRESS.
CAN YOU SHUT IT DOWN?

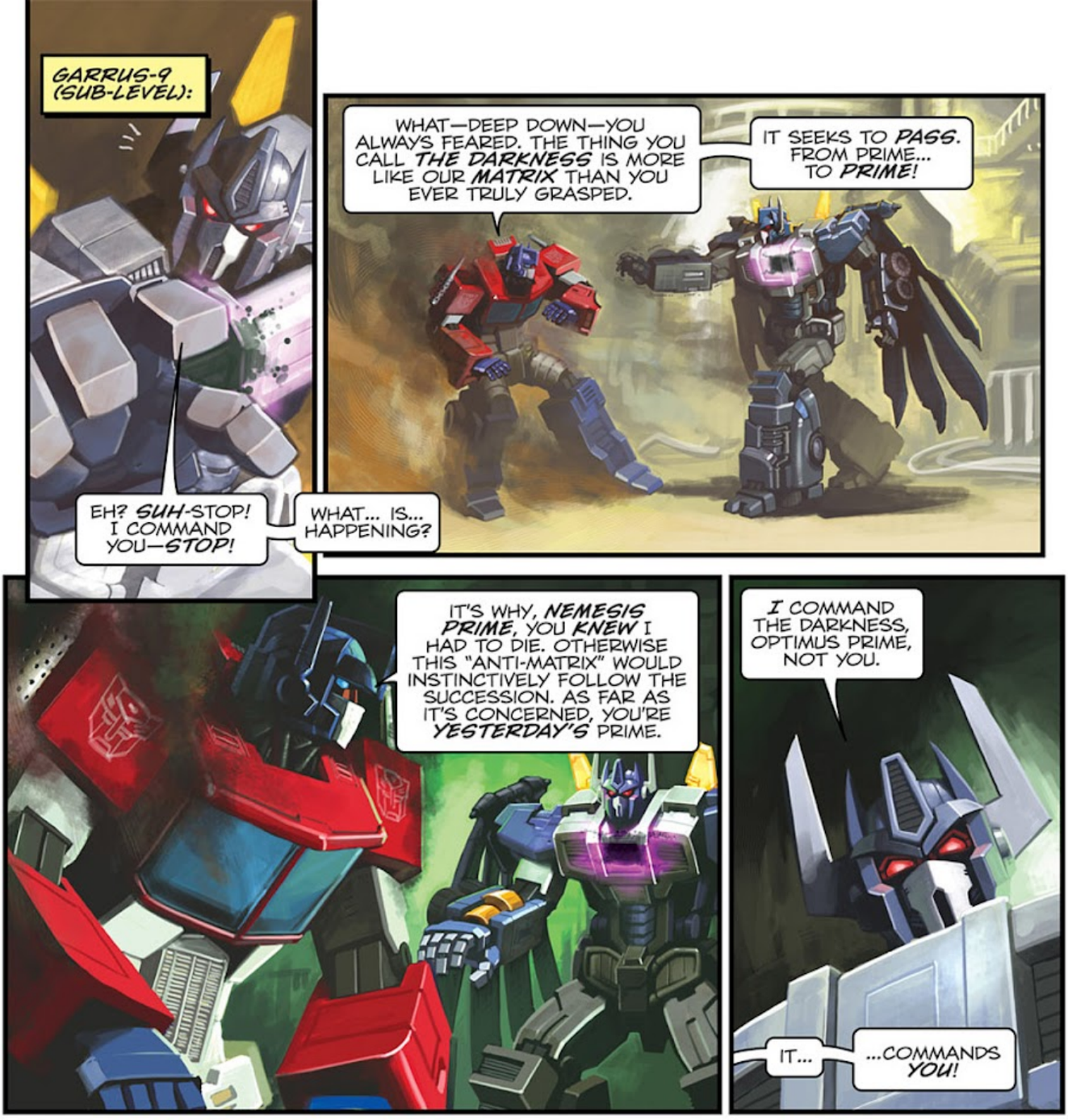

WITHOUT KNOWING WHAT IT IS? NO.
CAN IT BE PHYSICALLY RELOCATED?

MAYBE. HOLD ON...

SHLIK
WHAT THE—?

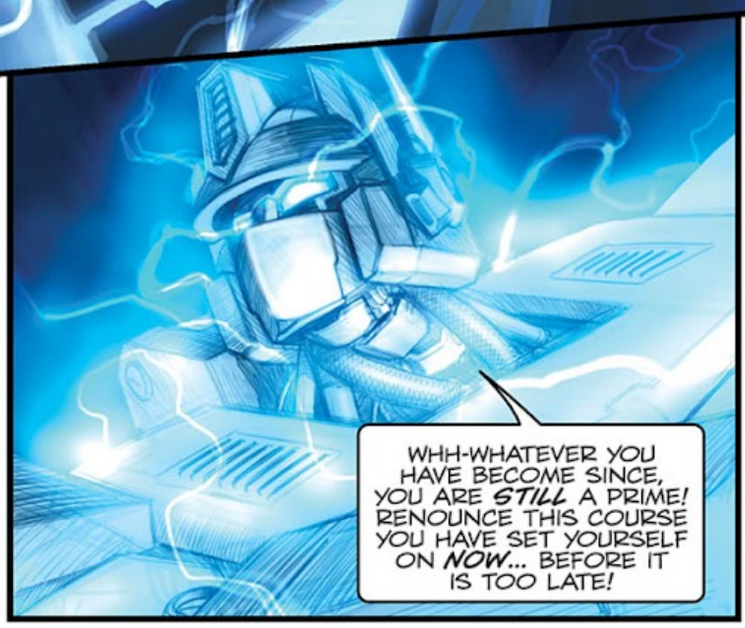
CONGRATULATIONS, JETFIRE, YOU HAVE GRADUATED FROM AN IRRITATION TO A FULL-BLOWN NUISANCE. AND IN SO DOING...
...YOU MERIT AN UNTIDY DEATH.
BLUDGEON! NO, NOT BLUDGEON. JHIAXUS!


HEADS UP, WRECKERS— INCOMING!


GARRUS-9 (SUB-LEVEL):
EH? SUH-STOP! I COMMAND YOU—STOP!
WHAT... IS... HAPPENING?
WHAT—DEEP DOWN—YOU ALWAYS FEARED. THE THING YOU CALL THE DARKNESS IS MORE LIKE OUR MATRIX THAN YOU EVER TRULY GRASPED.
IT SEEKS TO PASS. FROM PRIME... TO PRIME!
IT'S WHY, NEMESIS PRIME, YOU KNEW I HAD TO DIE. OTHERWISE THIS "ANTI-MATRIX" WOULD INSTINCTIVELY FOLLOW THE SUCCESSION. AS FAR AS IT'S CONCERNED, YOU'RE YESTERDAY'S PRIME.
I COMMAND THE DARKNESS, OPTIMUS PRIME, NOT YOU.
IT...
...COMMANDS YOU!

NO!
TRUTH IS, PRIME, I DON'T HAVE TO BE UP CLOSE...

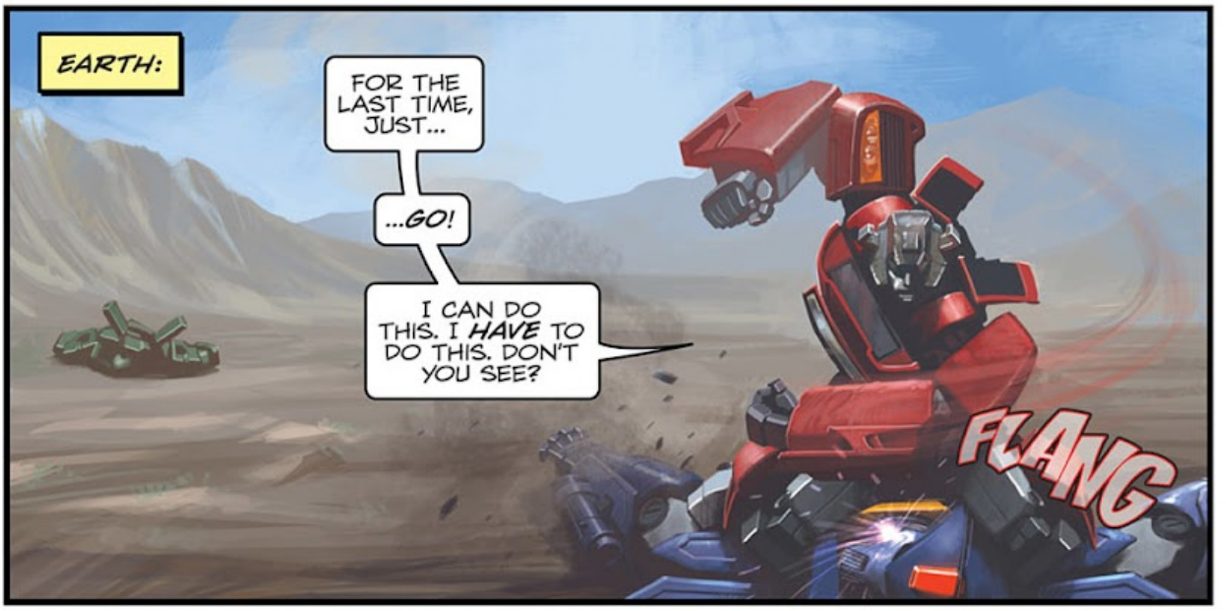
KA-RAAAK
...TO RID MYSELF OF YOU FOREVER!
NUUAH!

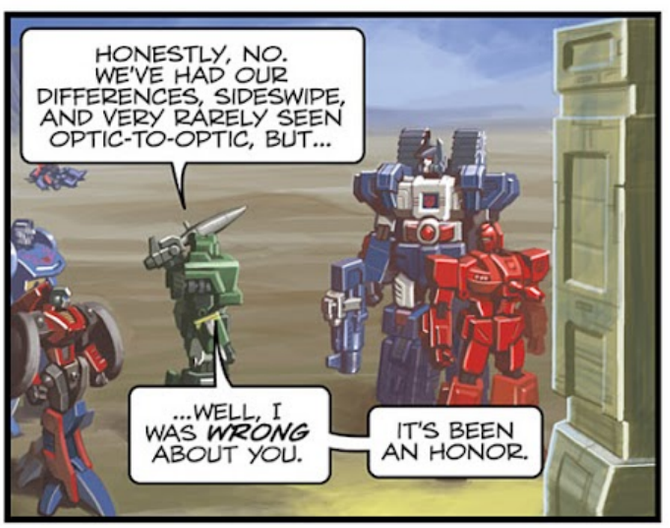

WHH-WHATEVER YOU HAVE BECOME SINCE, YOU ARE STILL A PRIME! RENOUNCE THIS COURSE YOU HAVE SET YOURSELF ON NOW... BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE!

AND WHY SHOULD I WANT TO DO THAT?
THIS IS PROGRESS, PRIME—EVOLUTION! WE CYBERTRONIANS SHALL BECOME THE TEMPLATE FOR AN ENTIRELY NEW UNIVERSE. IT IS SIMPLY OUR DUE AND FITTING DESTINY.

WHAT YOU CALL "PROGRESS" I CALL "PLAYING GOD."
AND I WILL STOP YOU AT ANY COST!

"DESTINY!"


EARTH:
FOR THE LAST TIME, JUST...
...GO!
I CAN DO THIS. I HAVE TO DO THIS. DON'T YOU SEE?
FLANG


HONESTLY, NO. WE'VE HAD OUR DIFFERENCES, SIDESWIPE, AND VERY RARELY SEEN OPTIC-TO-OPTIC, BUT...
...WELL, I WAS WRONG ABOUT YOU.
IT'S BEEN AN HONOR.

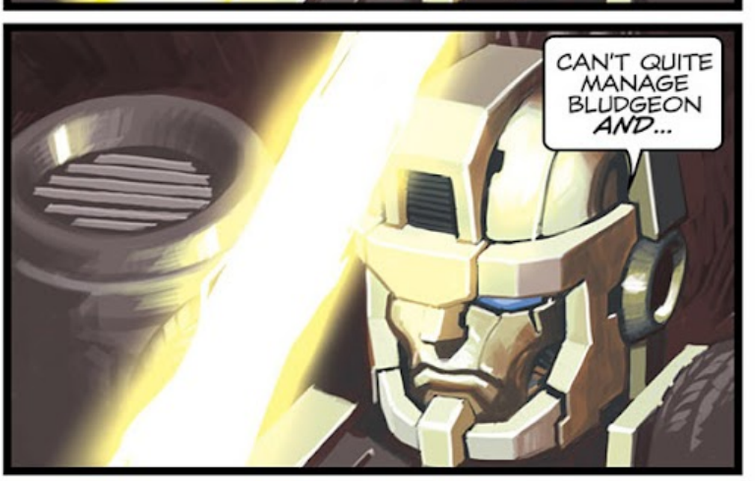
WE HAVE TO GO.
I KNOW. ROAD ROCKET, YOU'RE WITH ME. WARPATH, YOU AND FORTRESS MAXIMUS HAVE YOUR ASSIGNMENT. SKRAM—
YEAH, YEAH.

"GO GET THE PSYCHO."

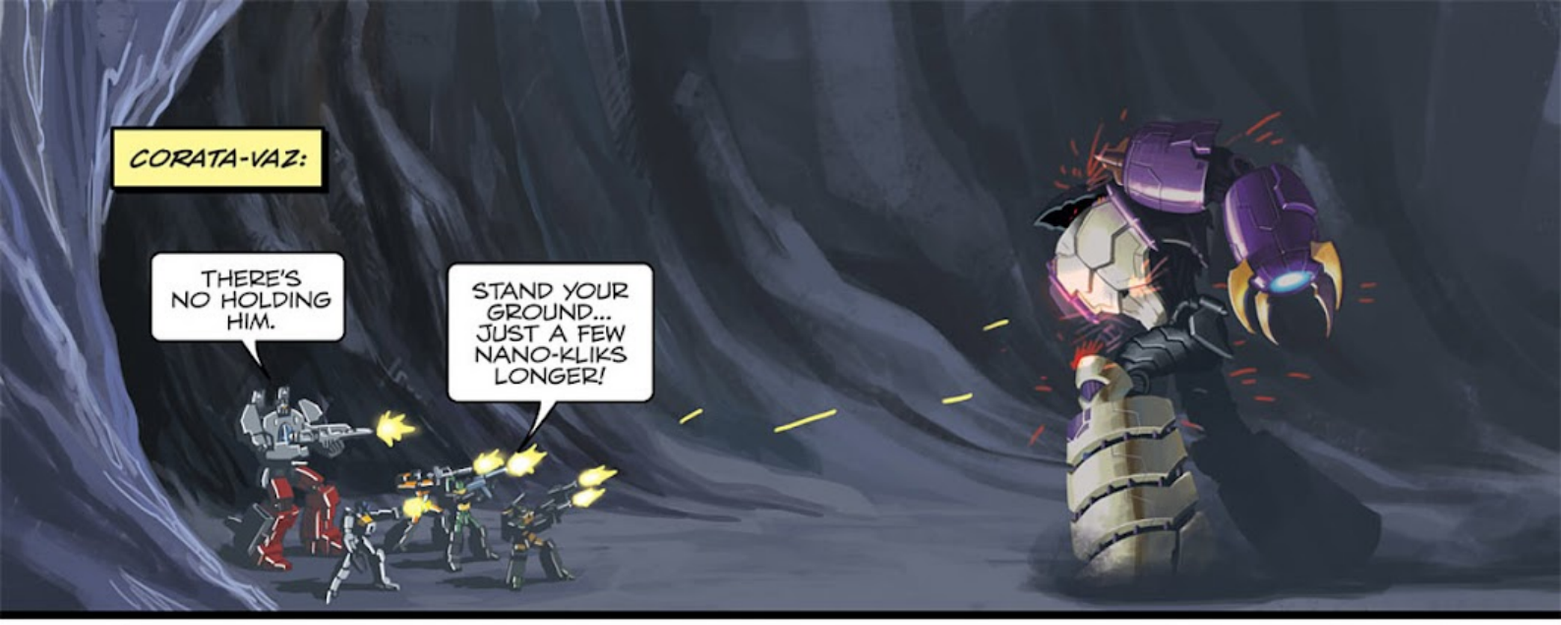
MY ADVERSARIES PROVE NOT ONLY INEXHAUSTIBLE BUT ALSO VERY HARD TO KILL.
WHEREAS I'M GETTING LOW ON POWER AND AMMO. REALLY...
...IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME.
FWOMP
BUT NOW, STRANGELY, IT DOESN'T SEEM TO MATTER. MY OBSESSION WITH SUNSTREAKER FEELS SOMEHOW TRIVIAL. I'VE PROVED WHATEVER I NEEDED TO PROVE... TO MYSELF!
THIS...
...WILL BE A GOOD DEATH!

GARRUS-9:
WHAT'S THE MATTER, JHIAXUS...
...THINGS NOT QUITE GOING TO PLAN?

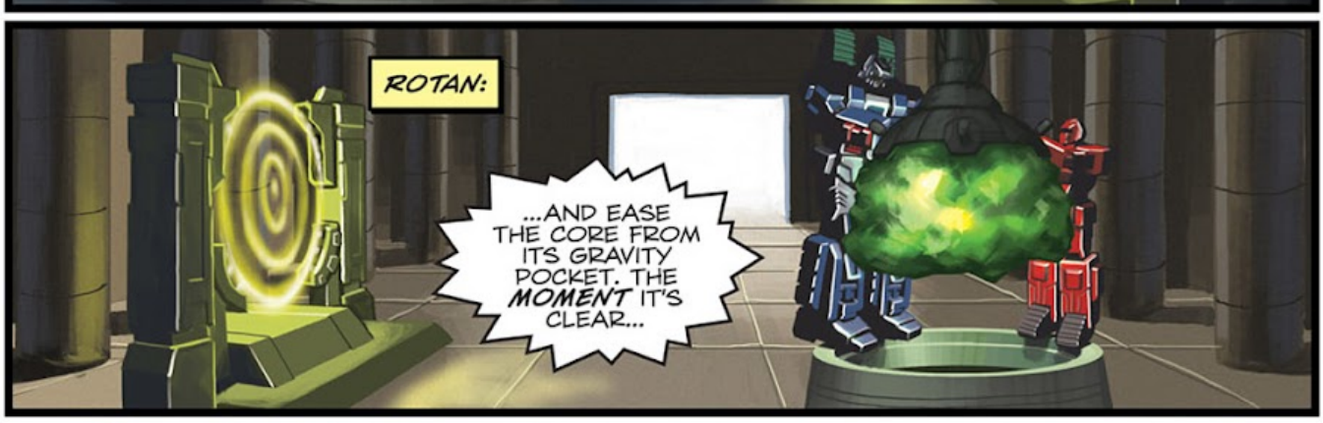
TOO MANY DEMANDS ON YOUR ATTENTION, PERHAPS?


CAN'T QUITE MANAGE BLUDGEON AND...

"...BE AWARE OF WHAT'S HAPPENING ELSEWHERE, ON OTHER FRONTS?
"MAYBE YOU'RE WORRIED, MAYBE YOU'RE WONDERING JUST HOW MUCH WE ALREADY KNOW...
"...AND HOW MUCH MORE WE'LL FIND OUT!"
QUESTION IS, CAN YOU AFFORD THE TIME AND EFFORT IT'LL TAKE TO KILL ME...
...WITH YOUR ENTIRE STRATEGY ABOUT TO FALL APART?

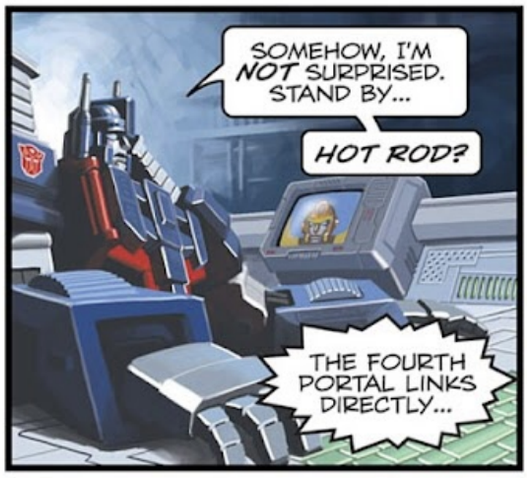

CORATA-VAZ:
THERE'S NO HOLDING HIM.
STAND YOUR GROUND... JUST A FEW NANO-KLIKS LONGER!

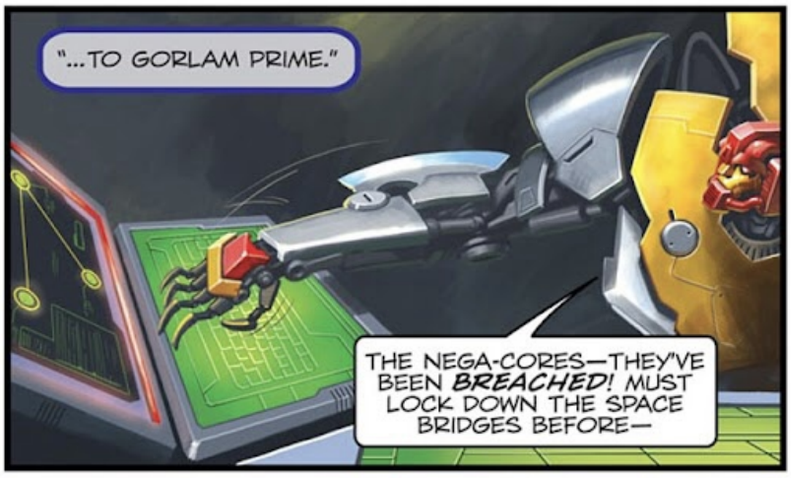
TWIN TWIST, TOPSPIN— STATUS!
ALMOST THERE.
LISTEN UP, ALL A' YOUS—TAKE THE FINAL RESTRAINING ROD FROM THE ACCELERATOR CAP...

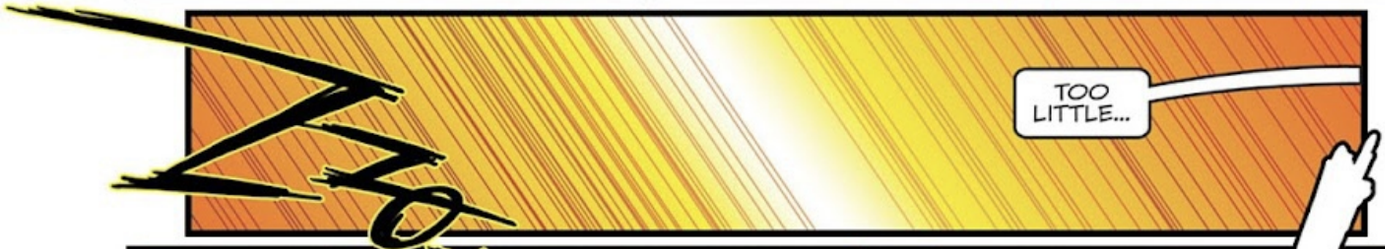

ROTAN:
...AND EASE THE CORE FROM ITS GRAVITY POCKET. THE MOMENT IT'S CLEAR...

VAN-DEMA SECTOR (FOURTH MOON OF BHUL):
...ESTABLISH A NULL CONTAINMENT FIELD AROUND IT AND PREP FOR IMMEDIATE RELOCATION.

EARTH:
ULTRA MAGNUS, IT'S SKRAM. I'M BACK.
MISSION, UM, ACCOMPLISHED. DIDN'T TAKE MUCH CONVINCING.


SOMEHOW, I'M NOT SURPRISED. STAND BY...
HOT ROD?
THE FOURTH PORTAL LINKS DIRECTLY...


"...TO GORLAM PRIME."
THE NEGA-CORES—THEY'VE BEEN BREACHED! MUST LOCK DOWN THE SPACE BRIDGES BEFORE—

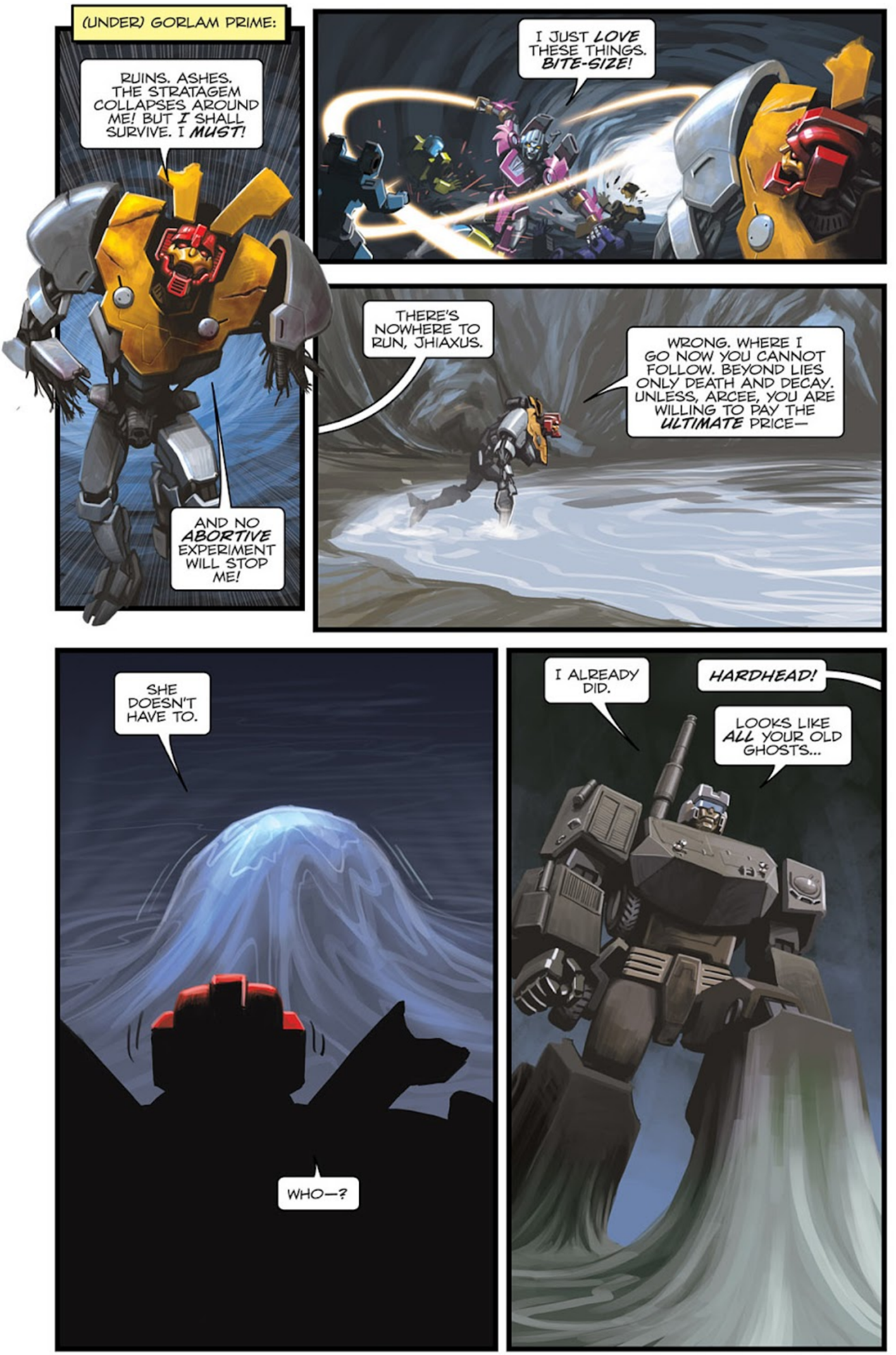

ZZOT
TOO LITTLE...

...TOO LATE.
AR-ARCEE?

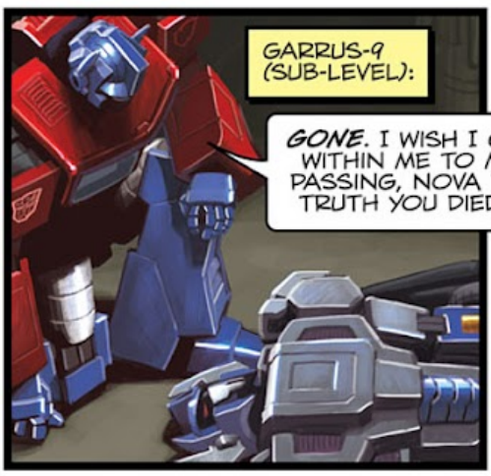
GARRUS-9 (SUB-LEVEL):
YOU -:HH:- HAVE SULLIED A PROUD LINEAGE OF PRIMES, NOVA. IT FALLS TO ME...
...TO PUT THINGS RIGHT.
SUCH UPSTART ARROGANCE! YOU REMIND ME OF—
-:GAH:-
VZARK
GALVATRONNN...
NO!
COLD. ANCIENT. TERRIBLE. WONDERFUL.
HEART OF DARKNESS, IT SPEAKS TO ME. PLEASE NO. LET ME BE STRONG.
QUICKLY. YOU HAVE TWO CHOICES.
KILL YOURSELF. HURL YOURSELF INTO THAT SOLAR POOL BEFORE THE DARKNESS ROBS YOU OF ANY LAST REMAINING FREE WILL...
...OR SURRENDER IT ME.

IT SPOKE TO ME TOO, PROMISING ANSWERS TO THE RIDDLES OF WHO I WAS, WHAT I WAS DESTINED TO BECOME. BUT IN THE END IT COULD NOT RESIST THE YAWNING TUG OF THE MATRIX VACUUM WITHIN NOVA PRIME.
IT IS THE FINAL PIECE OF THE PUZZLE. AFTER ALL THIS TIME I SHALL BE COMPLETE. RELEASE IT, PRIME... IT WILL COME TO ME.
CHOOSE—THE CROSSING OR THE POOL!
I CHOOSE...
YES! YES! IT ALL BECOMES CLEAR! THE VEIL PARTS!
I AM—
...BOTH.
WHA—?
NOOO!
ZA-SHAK!

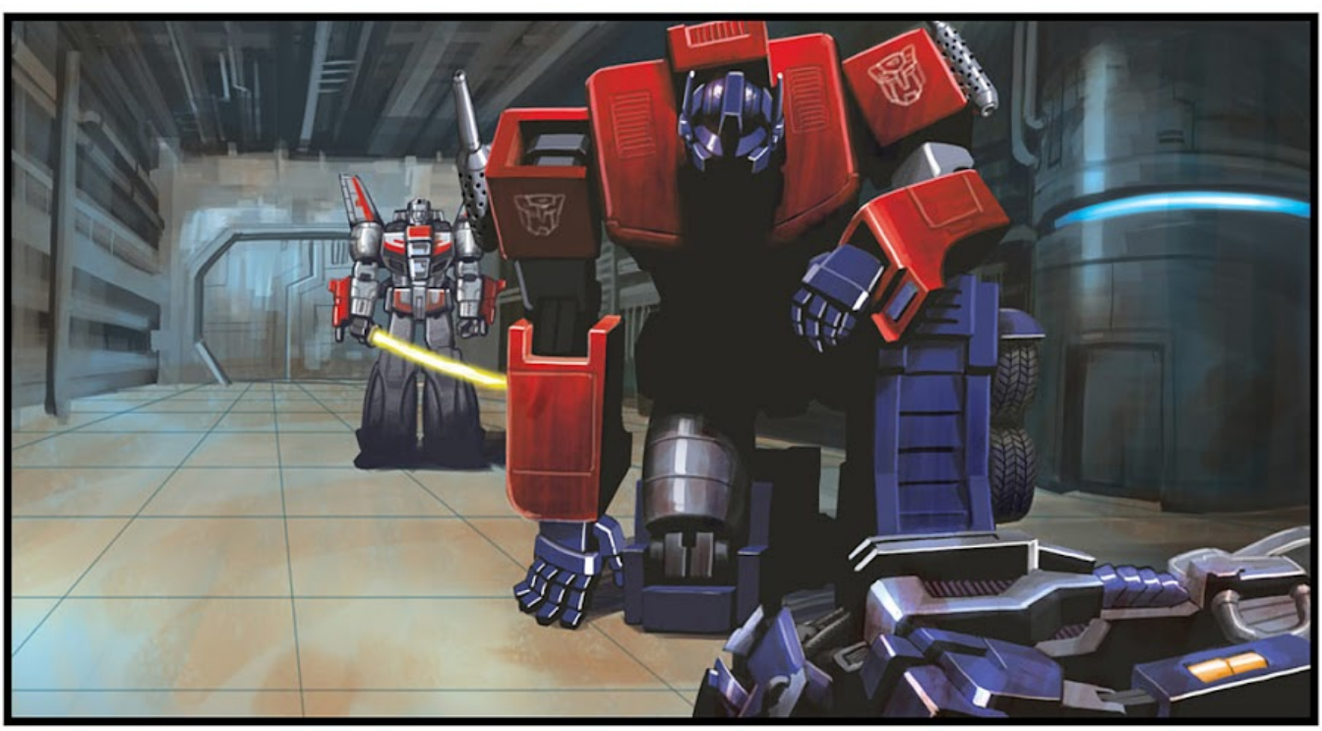
THE DEAD UNIVERSE:
HURRY! THERE'S NO TELLING HOW LONG BEFORE THESE THINGS DETONATE.
CLOUDBURST, YOU'RE SURE THERE'S NOTHING ALIVE IN THERE!
QUITE SURE. WHATEVER THIS PLACE IS, IT SEEMS UNABLE TO SUPPORT ANY KIND OF LIFE. AS WE SPEAK, IT'S KILLING OUR EXO-SHELLS IN TINY INCREMENTS.
RIGHT. GET OUT OF THERE...
"...NOW!"
JETFIRE! THE ANOMALY—IT'S CLOSING. WE DID IT. IT'S OVER.


(UNDER) GORLAM PRIME:
RUINS. ASHES. THE STRATAGEM COLLAPSES AROUND ME! BUT I SHALL SURVIVE. I MUST!
AND NO ABORTIVE EXPERIMENT WILL STOP ME!
I JUST LOVE THESE THINGS. BITE-SIZE!
THERE'S NOWHERE TO RUN, JHIAXUS.
WRONG. WHERE I GO NOW YOU CANNOT FOLLOW. BEYOND LIES ONLY DEATH AND DECAY. UNLESS, ARCEE, YOU ARE WILLING TO PAY THE ULTIMATE PRICE—
SHE DOESN'T HAVE TO.
WHO—?
I ALREADY DID.
HARDHEAD!
LOOKS LIKE ALL YOUR OLD GHOSTS...

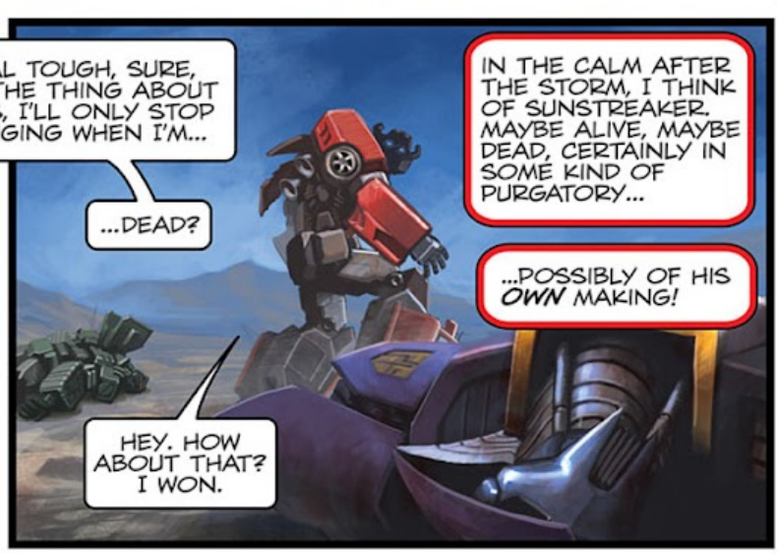
"...HAVE COME BACK TO HAUNT YOU!"
HAUUK!


GARRUS-9 (SUB-LEVEL):
GONE. I WISH I COULD FIND IT WITHIN ME TO MOURN YOUR PASSING, NOVA PRIME, BUT IN TRUTH YOU DIED LONG AGO.

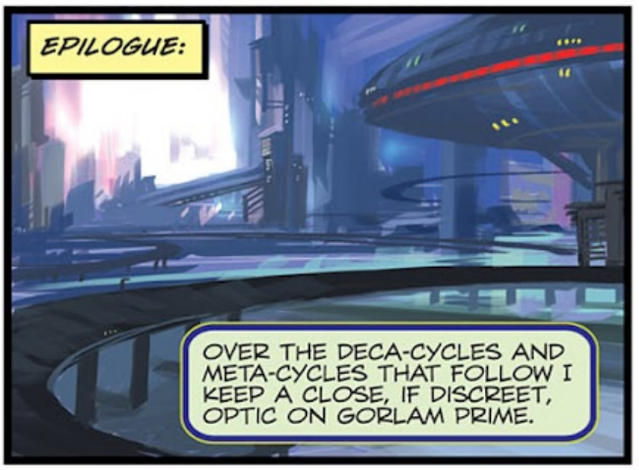
THE PART OF YOU THAT MATTERED, THE PART OF YOU THAT WAS A PRIME, WAS LOST AS SOON AS YOU TURNED AWAY FROM THE LIGHT...
...AND EMBRACED THE DARKNESS.

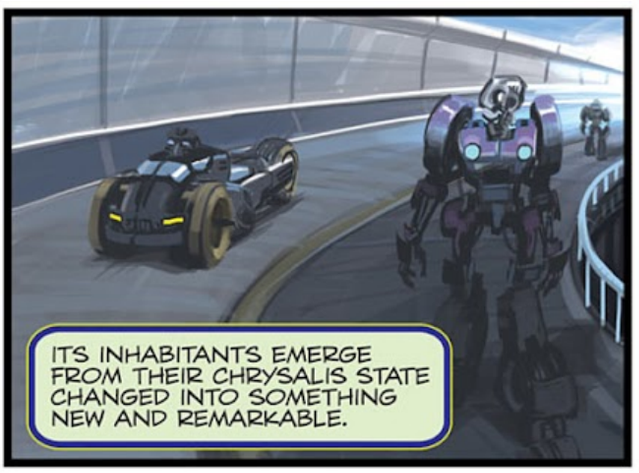


EARTH:
REAL TOUGH, SURE, BUT THE THING ABOUT ME IS, I'LL ONLY STOP SWINGING WHEN I'M...

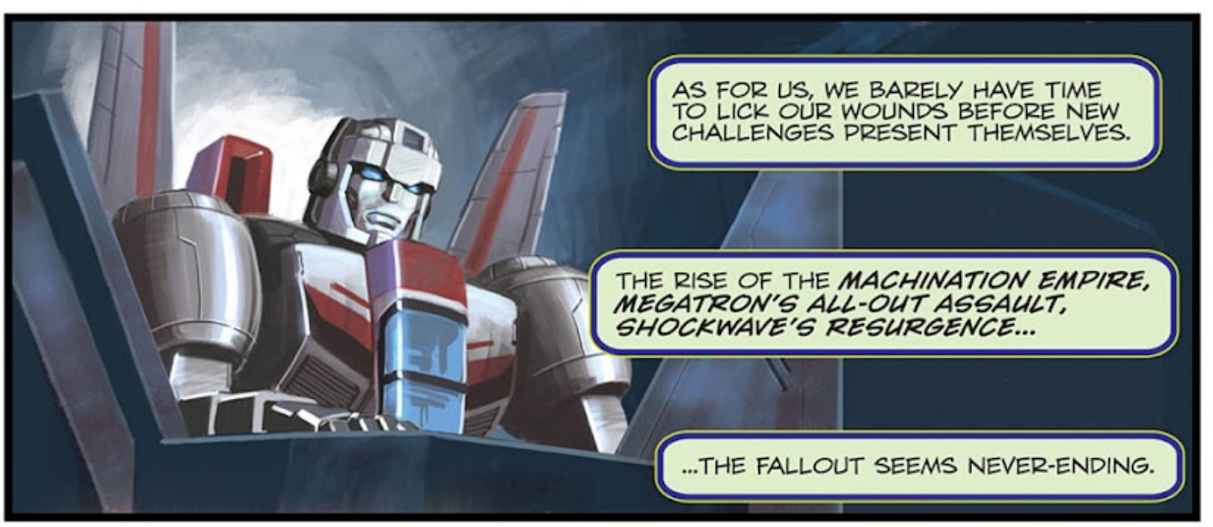

...DEAD?
IN THE CALM AFTER THE STORM, I THINK OF SUNSTREAKER. MAYBE ALIVE, MAYBE DEAD, CERTAINLY IN SOME KIND OF PURGATORY...
...POSSIBLY OF HIS OWN MAKING!
HEY. HOW ABOUT THAT? I WON.

AND I FIND I JUST DON'T CARE. MAYBE I NEVER DID.
I TRIGGER MY ORBITAL JUMP RECALL...
...AND DON'T LOOK BACK.
(UNDER) GORLAM PRIME:
HE WON'T STAY DEAD.
CAN'T.
LIKE ME NOW, HE'S A PART OF WHAT'S ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS PORTAL, A PLACE IN WHICH YOU SIMPLY... EXIST. HERE, WHERE THE WORLDS MESH, HE'S VIRTUALLY IMMORTAL.
YEAH? HM. ACTUALLY, THAT SUITS ME FINE.
MEANS I CAN KEEP KILLING HIM...
...AGAIN...
...AND AGAIN...
...AND AGAIN...
...AND AGAIN...


EPILOGUE:
OVER THE DECA-CYCLES AND META-CYCLES THAT FOLLOW I KEEP A CLOSE, IF DISCREET, OPTIC ON GORLAM PRIME.


ITS INHABITANTS EMERGE FROM THEIR CHRYSALIS STATE CHANGED INTO SOMETHING NEW AND REMARKABLE.

WHAT THEY ONCE WERE... IS FORGOTTEN. AS IS THE NAME OF THE WORLD THEY INHABIT. NOW, INSTEAD OF GORLAM PRIME...
...THEY CALL IT CYBERTRON.


AS FOR US, WE BARELY HAVE TIME TO LICK OUR WOUNDS BEFORE NEW CHALLENGES PRESENT THEMSELVES.
THE RISE OF THE MACHINATION EMPIRE, MEGATRON'S ALL-OUT ASSAULT, SHOCKWAVE'S RESURGENCE...
...THE FALLOUT SEEMS NEVER-ENDING.

BUT AT LEAST NOW, THE DENIZENS OF THE DEAD UNIVERSE...

...CAN FINALLY REST IN PEACE.
THE END?